

Jana's Talking Points
Fire Adapted New Mexico Asset Mapping Workshop
June 2018

Tuesday, July 26

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY-BASED ASSET MAPPING

TERMS

“Asset”

Focus: strengths of individuals, informal groups, formal organizations

“Mapping”

Identify assets and look at them in relation to each other, like any map

The process of identifying and locating the strengths is the focus, not the map itself

“Community”

Shared territory or place

Social organizations or institutions that provide regular interaction among residents

City council, schools, park

Social interaction on matters concerning a common interest

Shared fate – fire, also water, transportation, care for the vulnerable or children

“Engagement”

Working (with the public) together as equals to achieve common goals

Building community capacity “from the inside out”, not teaching, not informing

ACTIVITY: Assets/Deficits

1. Groups of four: Find three personal things that everyone in the group shares in common

Purpose: Experience of relationship-building

- Listening for connections between people, common ground
- Interactions went from focused on facilitator to relaxed, laughter, openness, different body language

2. Pairs: Share with each other one personal asset you have, something you're good at.

Then one deficit – something you can't do or have trouble with. Report to group your partner's name and what they said about themselves – record on flip chart in two columns: “Assets” and “Deficits”

Purpose: Experience of identity

3. What do you imagine happens to a community that is identified by its problems?
 Low-capacity, needs to be fixed, needs outside assistance and resources
 But a group of people that is identified by what it does well is a different story.
 Hope, opportunity, creativity, “let’s see what we can do with what we have”
 Assets list is what we draw from to engage community members

NEIGHBORHOOD NEEDS AND ASSETS MAPS

Maps indicate what is worthy of attention. (Examples in folders)

Neighborhood Needs Map –

- Puts reliance on outside resources and outside experts, while community members observe their issues being addressed
- Targets resources to the resource or service providers, not the residents
- Power comes from professional credentials
- Focus on deficiencies, inability to act on their own behalf, leads to residents adopting a negative self-concept or identity

Neighborhood Assets Map –

- Focus is on their effectiveness and their capacities
- No need to substitute outside experts, but maybe help them do what they do better
- People are portrayed as producers and contributors to community good

Community assets map --

- Individuals are uniquely related to their community groups and institutions
- Power comes from relationships with other community members – if you’re going to get involved, you gotta know some people; knowing people/associations creates opportunities

Main point:

Can’t build capacity on existing weaknesses

Can build capacity on existing strengths

BASICS I: ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

SLIDES (in folder)

1. ABCD started by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann, faculty members in the community studies program at Northwestern University

- They wanted to learn directly from community members who had experienced *success* in their own community building so visited 1000’s of communities
- asked: “What have you done that has been successful in your community that you could share with others?”
- common themes became Asset Based Community Development, or ABCD

- guidebook, “Building Communities from the Inside Out.” <https://resources.depaul.edu/abcd-institute/Pages/default.aspx>
- Community asset mapping is one of the strategies mentioned in the book.

Asset-Based Community Development Institute now at DePaul University, 41 faculty/practitioners

2. Definition of asset-based community development:

“Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.”

Common building blocks of successful community action: individuals, local associations, local institutions

Community asset mapping is about recognizing the strengths or assets in a community, strategically connecting them to each other, and then finding and supporting opportunities for them to work together productively.

3. Three types of community assets, different kinds of strengths.

INDIVIDUALS – LOCAL RESIDENTS

Everyone has *something* going for them, some gift or talent or skill.

These are used in community involvement as an enterprising interest or opportunity to teach. (Could be culturally specific)

ASSOCIATIONS - INFORMAL GROUPS

Groups of people who join together around a shared interest because they care about it.

Examples: neighborhood associations, people who walk their dogs together, prayer groups, knitting groups, sports clubs, and so on.

Not paid and the group itself doesn't own anything.

Strengths:

Networking capacity among community-minded residents

Tendency to get things done; local leadership

Ability to get local attention in creative, inexpensive ways

Community-level informal helping, support system, role models beyond family/friends

INSTITUTIONS - ORGANIZATIONS

These are also groups of people who gather together, but they do so because they are paid to spend their time producing a particular good or service.

Examples: for-profit, not-for-profit, and government organizations, so includes all businesses and service providers, community gardens, schools, police, churches, etc.

Strengths:

Concentration of resources provides functional support in community

Professional staff, buildings/parking lots, equipment,

Financial resources – involved in fulfilling needs of customers, clients

Professionally and financially responsible to clients, customers, citizens, market
Professional networks can affect local training and job opportunities

4. OTHER TYPES OF ASSETS

Physical assets – natural and built features of environment

Cultural assets – meaningful characteristics, events, places of a community that are culturally-specific

Economic assets – whatever forms of exchange, including employment, local businesses, bartering, markets, etc.

When you do this work, you choose what assets to map, but top 3 are basic.

PRACTICE ACTIVITY: INDIVIDUAL ASSETS MAPS

This is a particularly accessible version; can do intergenerationally, also makes good visuals for community-style work. (Instructions in folder)

BASICS II: MAPPING AND MOBILIZING COMMUNITY ASSETS

SLIDES: (continued, in folder)

1. “Community Asset Map”

Shows assets mapped on behalf of a vulnerable community

Provided as a database (provides a service to the community)

Not a community-based asset map; no focus on relationship-building in identifying assets

2. “Development” – (in relation to community capacity)

- Structural change that improves opportunities and quality of life for individuals
- Overarching value is “equity”, including opportunity for “agency” or the capacity to act in a self-determined way
- Distribution of power and resources are key

The basis for community resilience: use of existing capacity (e.g., assets)

3. ABCD/ABCE (Asset-Based Community Engagement)

Three principles

Focus on assets

Work (build capacity) from the inside out.

Relationship-driven

Three actions

Find assets.

Connect assets.

Put assets to work.

What I said:

ABCD is, by definition, asset-based. It starts with the strengths that already exists in the community.

ABCD requires the community to inventory the skills and talents of individuals, the assets of associations and assets of local institutions.

ABCD is internally-focused.

Community members frame the issues and challenges, and design possible plans of action. This means working for local definition, investment, creativity, vision and control.

ABCD is relationship-driven.

It involves communities deliberating about constantly building and rebuilding relationships among residents, local associations and local institutions.

Relationships create the conditions for building trust. It's important to share values and goals, but if you also have trustworthy relationships, you can make positive changes.

4. The Community Development Process

In folders: *Developing Community Connections with Asset Mapping OVERVIEW*; flip for steps

Points I stressed in the list of steps:

- Resources come after visioning
- Resources are also provided after action steps are decided – before offering resources, first you need to find out what community members are capable of doing, and they might need to find that out, too. Step 1 will help (covered tomorrow)
- **Important principle: do not do for them what community members can do for themselves.**
- Widening the circle means inclusivity – who else needs to be here? If you found the right people in step 2, it's easier.
- Long-term goal for my view of FAC is that community members become proactive in fire adaptation and become trusting and trusted partners of agencies.

5. Student Map vs. services “asset” map

Not every asset map is a literal map. There are many ways to graphically represent community strengths and the form doesn't matter as much as the empowerment that results from community members' identifying, mapping, then mobilizing their strengths.

Student map of “health” assets

When people map assets they value there can be surprises – to understand, get the story

6. Associations and Institutions in Asset-Based Community Engagement

Focus: roles and relationship of associational and organizational assets; overlap between personal and professional identities when we do this work in our local communities or as outsiders

(Image: Stick figure – person; circle – association; triangle – institution)

Person

Represents the importance of relationship-building.

Successful asset mapping relates to people as valuable individuals and takes their desire to contribute to the community very seriously. Your best community partner could be anyone.

Circle – associations (voluntary groups)

Distinct center – a shared interest -- holds the group together.

No hierarchy – people can come or leave according to how they feel or the time, energy – so they might not be as stable or dependable as a formal organization

Can get bigger without changing the structure or focus of the group

Triangle – institutions (formal organizations)

Triangle – institutions are stable assets in the community through their concentration of resources. It is possible for them to make a long-term commitment to a community

Tend to be hierarchical - usually have complex responsibilities and accountabilities to other institutions and networks that are not as *locally*-based as the informal groups in the community.

Tend to have set agendas because they exist to provide a well-defined service.

7. Associations and Institutions in Asset-based Community Engagement

Communities need both to have local resilience.

Associations are good at things like organizing, caring, compassion, and trust – taking care of people, having fun, relying on each other's strengths.

Institutions tend to be good at things like accounting, assessment, and evaluation – doing business, getting things done, practicing professional expertise.

Slide text:

Associations can support institutional work by:

- Getting “the word out” and involving residents at the “block” level
- Implementing programs themselves
- Providing local knowledge and connecting to invisible assets
- Influencing and shaping attitudes and behaviors in community
- Committing to change
- Linking institutional values to specific community and individual benefits
- Partnering in planning: defining problems and tailoring solutions to local conditions

Institutions can support associational work by:

- Acting as a fiscal agent for grants
- Purchasing from local businesses
- Make more of their community-based research participatory
- Convening events, festivals, workshops
- Providing opportunities for community members to “show off” their work
- Providing training opportunities and professional networking, employment
- Asking for planning input -- “the one priority for your neighborhood this year”

LEARNING ACTIVITY: “MAP” THE ASSETS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION

(Instructions in folder. We ended up doing this on the last day instead.)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27

*CAPACITIES FOR COMMUNITY ASSET MAPPING:
ATTENTION & INCLUSION*

Most points from this powerpoint presentation are contained in my article:

http://www.academia.edu/7832994/The_Towns_Abuzz_Collaborative_Opportunities_for_Environmental_Professionals_in_the_Slow_City_Movement

PRACTICE ACTIVITY: CONNECTING ASSETS WITH THE KNOW-TEACH-LEARN EXERCISE

(Instructions in folder)

Additional application: use for focused purpose, e.g., starting a grassroots organization like a prescribed burn association or a Fire Safe Council.

Use similar to individual capacity inventory: 1st = identify individual assets, then do something like this to discover any hidden assets and to start “mobilizing” (seeing connections, ideas, opportunities among assets people have).

STRATEGIES I: “MAPPING” METHODS AND IMPLICATIONS

Situation Assessment

If you don’t already have community connections, start here (See *Tools Series* guide in folder)

Aim of situation assessment = find “connectors” (see next *Tools Series* guide in folder)

TYPES OF ASSET MAPS

Asset inventories – see template in folder

To get “lay of the land”

Include basic three types of assets

Remember to set geographic limits

Individual capacity inventories

Usually done as a face-to-face interview

To find out who can do what – e.g., for an instrumental purpose

Precedes “Know-Teach-Learn” exercise, what do you want to do? Or to teach?

Individual asset maps

Example: earlier exercise, with outline of a human, “gifts of head, hands, heart”

Can be broader, looser than “individual capacity inventory”

Positive self-concept and relationship-building exercise

Geographic asset maps – physical space and/or events

High to low-tech for different situations (see slide of hand-drawn student map)

Always participatory: digital maps, paper maps, 3D maps (sculpted)

Be aware of privacy issues, especially for vulnerable populations (elderly)

Good festival booth activity to draw people into conversation

Associational asset mapping

Identify assets of community associations you know and don't know in a community
 Start by interviewing a member of each association to assess the level of interest
 Your "connectors" (community members) do this most effectively (not situation assessment)

Institutional asset mapping – map your institution's assets

Individual assets of employees and volunteers
 Physical space and equipment
 How money is spent
 Current relationships with community (e.g., see "Map the Assets of Your Organization" exercise in folder)
 Alert: there may be internal associations

What do you say if people aren't interested? Good questions to try:

"Are you interested in finding out more about your capacities?"
 "Are you interested in finding out more about what community groups can do?"

For me, it worked to say some version of: "Fire is a problem, and everyone I've talked to knows it. I really think we can do more together, as a community, than separately. What do you think?" Follow-up question: "Do you want to keep in touch and find out what people in the community are talking about doing?"

STRATEGIES II: COMMUNITY-BASED ASSET MAPPING AND PROJECT PLANNING

Focus: Asset Mapping projects in action – getting them going and keeping them going

1. Employed people usually wear two hats:

a citizen/associational hat – who you are outside of work
 a professional/institutional hat – who you are at work

Be very aware of what "hat" you are wearing

Citizen hat – you represent your assets to contribute, relationships you enjoy
 Professional hat – represent agency, performance criteria

The "hat" you are wearing will greatly affect your role and how much of the process and outcome you need to manage.

If you are leading a community asset-mapping effort, **you need time and attention to lead it with respect for the relationship-building aspect.** Without that, you have only the map and none of the community-building.

ABCD term: "gappers" – people who work between the institution's interests and the citizens' interests, trying to mediate between the institution's requirements and citizens' unique circumstances.

2. You can't control the outcome of citizen-driven work; outcomes change; "emergent conditions"
 Localized opportunities come up; people take advantage of them.
 Plans emerge with constantly evolving circumstances.

Community-based work is distributed leadership, not centralized leadership
 Importance of the right people, "connectors" (see *Tools Series* guide in folder)

It is necessary to be strategic:

Wendy McCaig, ABCD practitioner/faculty: "You are not in a constant state of improvisation. To be strategic is to understand that a wide variety of actions done with an informed perspective, or worldview, can contribute to collective success."

CDOD diagram (in folder)

Example from Wendy's work: 5 neighborhoods with same asset mapping process, 3 of the 5 neighborhoods had the same concern (kids' safety) and they came up with three different action plans:

- In neighborhood A, a resident decides to start a cheerleading team.
- In neighborhood B, residents started serving cocoa at the bus stop.
- In neighborhood C, the neighbors felt speed bumps were the best solution.

The differences come from different inputs (not different types of inputs)

The environment in which these residents live is one input.

- In Neighborhood A, gun violence issue, so getting kids off the streets was a priority, so cheerleading team.
- In Neighborhood B, high number of sex offenders, so bus stop is seen as the place where young people are vulnerable.
- In neighborhood C, the only place for the kids to play is in the street so speeding cars are the concern.

Another input that varies is **the skills of the neighbors themselves**.

- In Neighborhood A, a resident was a former competitive cheer coach.
- In neighborhood B, cocoa at the bus stop was the solution because a resident volunteered to make the cocoa and organize others to help her.
- In neighborhood C, the neighbors were motivated because a young person had been struck by a speeding car.

3. Discussion of how to integrate asset-based approach into your work --

Suggested steps for an asset-based project:

Define your goal

Decide specific objectives to make the goal concrete

Create the questions necessary to find out what we need to meet goals

How will you use the information gathered?

How many people will be interviewed?

Is training necessary for the people who will do the interviewing?

Info management plan

How will the results/info be shared w/participants (the people interviewed)?

Thursday, June 28

STRATEGIES III: PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Focus: Power dynamics of decision-making; unconscious bias against non-professionals in your field

“Ladder of Citizen Participation” (in folder)

Intentionally provocative – represents point of view of community members

Classic: 1960’s urban renewal context with “maximum feasible participation”

Non-participation: “Manipulating” and “Therapy”

Degrees of tokenism: “Informing” and “Consulting” and “Placating”

But it is possible to use surveys in a more participatory way – send results to participants and have a meeting to discuss the results and find out what they want to do about it

Degrees of citizen power: “Partnering” and “Delegating power” and “Citizen control”

Savannah example: Recreation dept. did local hiring, shared facilities with community associations, kept hours determined by local neighborhood

Advice from Henry to professionals – share expertise and access to resources, but don’t define the community’s problem or prioritize solutions. Everyone in the dept. spent time with community members and had training in ABCD

(Workshop was scheduled to end with planning template; see final sheet in folder)